



SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The Seaport Area's August seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 4.9 percent from July's rate of 4.6 percent, as shown in Seaport Table 1. In August 2002, the rate was 4.7 percent. Even though the unemployment rate increased slightly, total employment in August 2003 remained near July's totals, which is especially good news considering that employment in August usually decreases as agriculture and food processing wrap up the harvest season. Seaport's *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* decreased by 220 from July 2003, but the real story is the loss of 1,140 jobs from August 2002. The year-over-year job decreases occurred in almost all industries with the largest decreases recorded in *Construction*, *Financial Activities*, and *Professional & Business Services*. In *Construction*, both industrial and residential construction jobs have decreased from last year as projects were completed. Idaho Department of Labor analysts will be tracking these employment decreases in *Financial Activities* and *Professional & Business Services* to see if they continue and to determine which specific sectors are affected. In spite of these decreases, several large projects will start in the coming months, such as the Nez Perce Tribe Clearwater Casino project near Lewiston and Interventional Pain Consultants clinic at the new Lewiston Business and Technology Park.

SPECIAL TOPIC:

Forest Certification

Forest certification stamps that appear on wood products are designed to tell consumers the wood used in the products has been grown and harvested in an environmentally friendly manner. For producers of wood products, like Potlatch Corp., the stamps might be the best way to tell consumers the company is using responsible business practices. This certification also could become a business necessity. Public and private forest owners are increasingly hiring in-

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Washington

	Aug 2003*	July 2003	Aug 2002	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	35,670	35,760	34,760	-0.3	2.6
Unemployment	1,760	1,630	1,630	8.0	8.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.9	4.6	4.7		
Total Employment	33,910	34,140	33,130	-0.7	2.4
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	35,380	35,690	34,540	-0.9	2.4
Unemployment	1,490	1,470	1,370	1.4	8.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.2	4.1	4.0		
Total Employment	33,890	34,220	33,170	-1.0	2.2
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	26,120	26,340	27,260	-0.8	-4.2
Goods-Producing Industries	4,370	4,540	4,760	-3.7	-8.2
Natural Resources & Mining	200	180	230	11.1	-13.0
Construction	1,000	990	1,200	1.0	-16.7
Manufacturing	3,170	3,370	3,330	-5.9	-4.8
Wood Product Manufacturing	550	550	610	0.0	-9.8
Food Manufacturing	90	270	110	-66.7	-18.2
Paper Manufacturing	1,220	1,220	1,260	0.0	-3.2
Other Manufacturing	1,310	1,330	1,350	-1.5	-3.0
Service-Providing Industries	21,750	21,800	22,500	-0.2	-3.3
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,610	5,570	5,480	0.7	2.4
Wholesale Trade	650	630	650	3.2	0.0
Retail Trade	3,660	3,630	3,530	0.8	3.7
Utilities	90	90	90	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,210	1,220	1,210	-0.8	0.0
Information	370	360	360	2.8	2.8
Financial Activities	1,610	1,680	1,810	-4.2	-11.0
Professional & Business Services	1,380	1,380	1,590	0.0	-13.2
Education & Health Services	3,780	3,780	3,740	0.0	1.1
Leisure & Hospitality	2,600	2,570	2,730	1.2	-4.8
Other Services	1,160	1,160	1,140	0.0	1.8
Government Education	1,820	1,870	2,060	-2.7	-11.7
Government Administration	2,550	2,560	2,690	-0.4	-5.2
Government Tribes	870	870	900	0.0	-3.3

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

dependent auditors to inspect and certify their lands. These forest owners reason that it won't be long before such certification will be essential to sell their logs, lumber, or paper. Large home improvement retailers like Home Depot, Lowes, and Lanoga Corp., parent company of Lumbermen's Building Center stores, have all declared a preference for certified wood products. Some cities, corporations, and universities have adopted "green" building codes that demand certified wood products, and AOL Time Warner has said that 80 percent of the paper it uses will come from certified forests by 2006. Potlatch Corp., with 670,000 acres of forest land in North Central Idaho, and Bennett Forest Industries, with 12,000 acres, want access to these markets and have been certified or are

seeking certification. Acquiring the certification can take time, and a considerable amount of money and planning, while there are no guarantees a landowner who decides to undergo the process will be successful. So if a company such as Potlatch wants to be known as a good steward of the land, it will have to earn it by opening the company's operations to independent environmental auditors. Auditors for the Forest Stewardship Council evaluate landowners based on three broad categories: how well they manage their wood supply for long-term sustainability, how they treat the environment, and how they deal with neighboring communities and their employees. "As you might imagine, it's a balancing act," says Michael Thompson, an auditor for Scientific Certification Systems and a forestry consultant from Maine. "What we are looking for is how well they are balancing those three things."

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Clearwater County

- Idaho's U.S. Senators Mike Crapo and Larry Craig are trying to land \$1 million for Orofino and Clearwater Counties to address economic losses caused by the annual drawdown of Dworshak Reservoir for fish migration purposes. The money was added to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' budget in September, along with language that directs the Corps to spend the money on projects to improve use of the reservoir and for economic mitigation for the Orofino community. The 55-mile-long reservoir on the North Fork of the Clearwater River is lowered 80 feet each summer to help cool the lower Snake River, and speed threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead to the ocean. According to a University of Idaho study, the drawdowns cause short-term losses of up to \$1.35 million in sales each year and the loss of 36 jobs.

Idaho and Lewis Counties

- Syringa General Hospital (SGH) has acquired a helical computed tomography (CT) system from Toshiba Medical Systems. The \$500,000 machinery is designed to perform quicker exams and deliver optimal image quality. "We are really fortunate to have this type of equipment in a rural area such as Idaho County," said SGH radiology manager Dave Miller. The CT can make the detection of certain conditions, such as cancer and head and spine injuries, faster and easier by delivering clearer, more precise images of internal organs and the skeletal system. This up-to-date, state-of-the-art equipment allows more exams to be conducted in Grangeville rather than requiring a patient to go to Lewiston or elsewhere.

Latah County

- Vacant business spaces on downtown streets and in malls around Moscow are being reoccupied. Zume, a pastry shop, and Emperor of India, a restaurant, are among some of the newer tenants in downtown Mos-

cow. Another new tenant who's received a lot of attention is New St. Andrews College, a private, conservative Christian school that owns one building, the former Verizon Building on the south side of Friendship Square. The college accepts only 40 to 50 students each year, with a total enrollment of about 200. The students bring \$2 million to the community each year, including tuition, and provide a boost to downtown businesses on a daily basis. Gritman Medical Center's expansion also will strengthen the downtown by bringing in more visitors. In addition two new stores and one eatery—Christopher & Banks, Big 5 Sporting Goods, and Sangria Grill and Bar—are opening soon at the Palouse Mall on the Moscow-Pullman Road, bringing the 416,000-square-foot shopping center's occupancy rate to 90 percent. Christopher & Banks is a Minneapolis-based chain that sells clothing targeted to working women between the ages of 35 and 55 who have families. Big 5 Sporting Goods, which opened a store in Lewiston in 2001, is constructing a 9,900-square-foot building at the Palouse Mall. Both stores plan to open in October. Sangria Grill and Bar will occupy a 3,300-square-foot building that once housed the Treaty Grounds, a brewpub. It's expected to serve its first meals at the end of October. The food will be inspired by traditional Peruvian cooking and will include seafood, meat, and vegetable entrees. Just like downtown Moscow and the Palouse Mall, space is becoming more scarce at East-side Market Place, which includes the addition of a Sears home appliance store that is projected to open in November.

Nez Perce County

- Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC) broke ground in August on a 3,500-seat multipurpose activity center to replace the aging 1,400-seat Warrior Gymnasium. How to replace Warrior Gymnasium, which was built in 1937, has been under discussion for more than 30 years, but the project began in earnest in the early 1990s when then-President Lee Vickers began stumping for funding to get the project underway. Then in 1994 LCSC requested planning money from the State Board of Education for what was then expected to be a 4,000-seat gymnasium with a 1,200-seat auditorium/theater, swimming pool, racquetball courts, art studios and classrooms, and an estimated \$13 million price tag. Several years and many modifications later, LCSC students voted to raise \$1.5 million through fees, the community raised another \$1.5 million from 419 individual and corporate donors, and the state provided the rest of the funding for the now \$16.4 million, 100,000-square-foot center. But the project was put on the back burner sev-

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eral more times, most recently last year when the state fell into a budget crisis and such projects were frozen. In May the Idaho Legislature, backed by Governor Dirk Kempthorne, approved the use of state bonds to finance the center and nine other building projects throughout the state. The multi-purpose activity center project is expected to take two years to complete and will be built in two phases. The completed center will include three full-sized basketball courts, weight-training rooms, seven classrooms, and the capacity to house large sporting and entertainment events.

- A ribbon cutting in September opened a new road in Lewiston's Business and Technology Park, marking the completion of infrastructure at the site. The one-mile stretch of Juniper Drive runs between Royal Plaza Care Center and the new Nez Perce Plaza shopping center. It winds past the site of Interventional Pain Consultants clinic, which will be the park's first tenant. The clinic, the practice of four Lewiston-Clarkston Valley anesthesiologists, is under construction. The business and technology park grew from Valley Vision's efforts to recruit new employers to the area. The project cost \$2.2 million,

with \$1.8 million provided by federal grants. The remainder was a mix of city, county, and port money. Juniper Drive now has three lanes, one each for northbound and southbound traffic, plus a turning lane and sidewalks on both sides. The infrastructure work included lines for water and sewer, and a conduit for high-speed fiber optic cable. Trees will be planted along paths and throughout the park to create a pleasant setting for workers and visitors. Interventional Pain Consultants will employ between 12 and 15 people. Although plans have been delayed several times, Regence BlueShield of Idaho also plans to locate there with as many as 500 workers, representing a mix of employees who will move from another Lewiston location and people hired for new positions. The latest plan calls for Regence's 55,000-square-foot building to open in the summer of 2005.

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clinic, a photocopy business, and an optometrist—have committed to lease space at the business park, and developers hope to attract three other businesses.

Caribou County

- A grand opening celebration was held for Xpress Cash's new office in Soda Springs. The office is located at 316 West Second South and offers payday and title loans and check cashing services.
- The U.S. Bureau of Land Management approved Agrium's expansion plan at North Rasmussen Ridge, a phosphate mine located northeast of Soda Springs. Agrium plans to extend their mine operations to the north onto U.S. Forest Service and state property. The approval includes reclamation of the Central Rasmussen Ridge Mine.

Oneida County

- The Oneida County Library's remodeling project, which began in the spring of 2002, was completed

this summer. Projects recently completed were the addition of new countertops, storage, sod, and a sprinkling system, and removal and resurfacing of the parking lot asphalt.

Power County

- After 35 years of business in American Falls, Larsen's Paint & Glass will close. The business will conduct a liquidation sale and final closing of the store will occur within a few weeks. The store is closing because owners John and Carma Larsen are retiring.

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